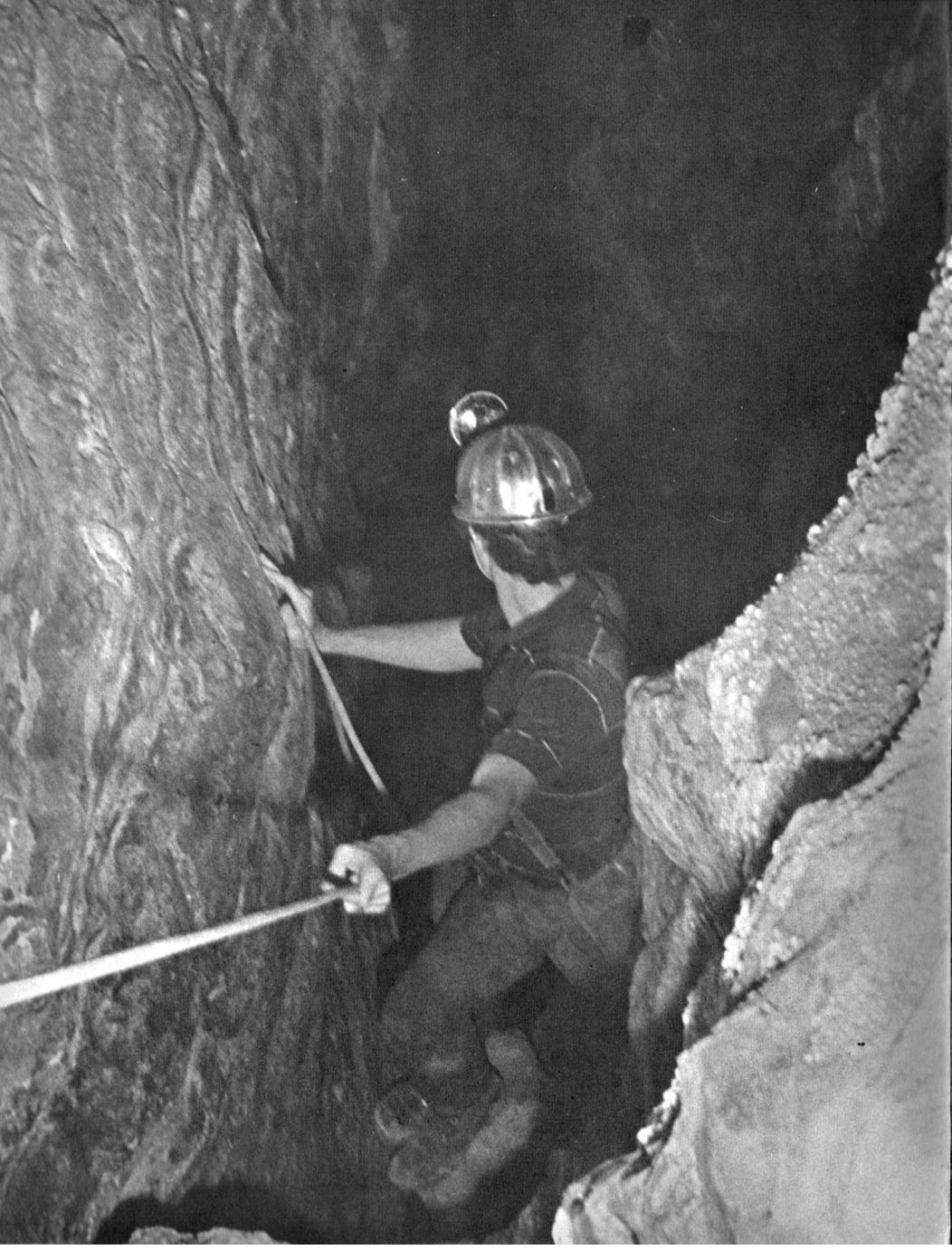
swtsg newsletter 1973



The SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE STUDENT GROTTO NEWSLETTER is published once a year. The purpose of the newsletter is to publish in one place all activities of the grotto during the year. Our exchange policy is to exchange with those who exchange with us. Additional copies are available for $1.00 postage paid U.S. The official grotto address is: Southwest Texas State Student Grotto, Student Union, San Marcos, Texas 78666.

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Front cover was taken by Dale Pate in La Gruta del Palmito. Inside front cover is the second drop in Fisher's Fissure, taken by Keith Heuss. Human skulls from ancient burial in Cueva de Tanchipa, inside back cover, was taken by Steve Fleming in December. Outside back cover is entrance to Fisher's Fissure by Keith Heuss.

Editorial - For those who have wondered, the photograph on the front cover of our * 71-•72 newsletter was taken in Falkensteiner Hohle in Southern Germany by myself in 1970. About 50 copies of our '71-'72 newsletter are still available **for 50¢ each. The 1973 newsletter is a** collection of trip reports and photographs from this year. With the exception of two trips, one to Precipicio and one to Tanchipa, there were no other trips taken by SWTG members this year. If there are any omissions, it is the fault of members. You are responsible for turning trip reports in to the research chairman! No articles are featured in this issue due to the fact that we had to limit the length of the newsletter to 32 pages. Dale Pate is beginning work on the 1974 newsletter. Grotto members are encouraged to submit material for publication to Dale Pate.

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Birthday Passage
Dale Pate

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** NSS Members

SPRING 1973

6 • Bud Allen

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Brian Clark

Larry Doreck

Ellen Erlund

* ** Steve Fleming
Steve Fonville

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* ** Blake Harrison
7 * ** Robert Hemperly
* ** Keith Heuss

Mike Hill

4 ** Jeri Jones
3 **Mary Kay Krauska
2 * ** Sandi Luker

* ** Logan McNatt

1 * ** Stan Moerbe

Dottie Morris

5 * ** Dale Pate

Donald Spear
* ** John Teates

** Mike Walsh

FALL 1973

Pat Baimbridge
Nina Bain
William Ballard
Frank Binney **

Steve Cimino

Candis Coffee

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Bob Finger

Michael Gallager
Jim Haning
Blake Harrison ** Robert Hemperly * ** 7 Jody Hestand
Keith Heuss * ** 6 Mike Hill *
Sylvia Hurd
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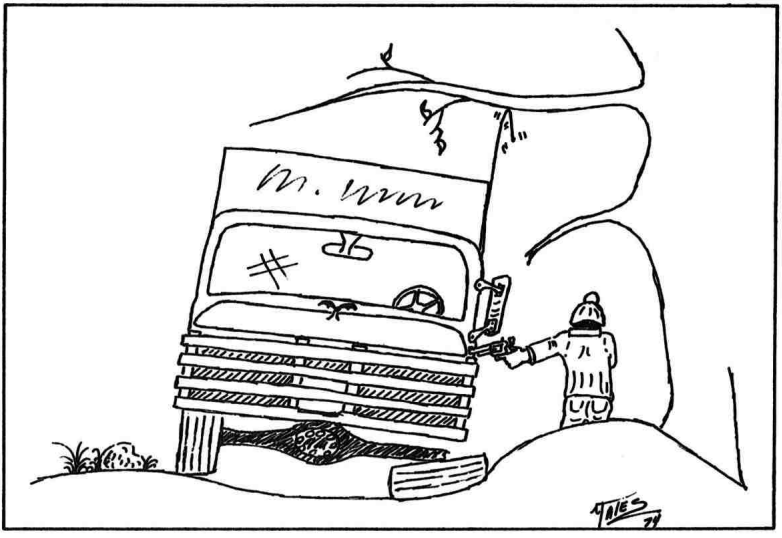
Ed Jacoby
Jeri Jones ** 4
Mary Kay Krauska ** 3 Sandi Luker * ** 2 Dan Maddox
Marian Manganello Logan
McNatt * ** Walter Miller
Stan Moerbe * ** 1

Katie Monahan

Janel Nye
Hal Odum
Peggy Odum
Dale Pate * ** 5
Terry Raines * **
Kathy Ann Richardson

Bill Thomas
Mike Walsh **
Tom Wright

TRIP REPORTS



Date: January 4-10, 1973
Destination: New Mexico, Hueco Tanks, Big Bend
Persons: Keith Heuss, Sand! Luker, Stan Moerbe
Reported by: Keith Heuss

We drove to New Mexico to see some snow. At White Sands we played in the snow for a while. Our next stop was at Hueco Tanks, 30 miles Bast of El Paso. We visited numerous shelters with pictographs in them. From there we went to Big Bend to hike the South Rim. When we got to the rim we found the view of the desert area to the south of the mountains blocked by cloud cover. When we got back to San Marcos it snowed the next day.

Pictographs at Hueco Tanks Keith Heuss

Date: January 13-14, 1973
Destination: Brehmer Cave (Safety Seminar)
Persons: Steve Fleming, Jeri Jones, Dale Pate, John Teates, and a host of others.
Reported By: Dale Pate

We got to the cave about 1:00 pm Saturday. Other members of our club already there were Steve and John. Also, there was Dick Montgomery a former member of our club. The purpose of the meeting was to practice safety techniques in caving. We learned how to pick up injured people, how to pass strechers and get an injured person from a pit and a cave. It was very interesting. Other people showed up during the session.

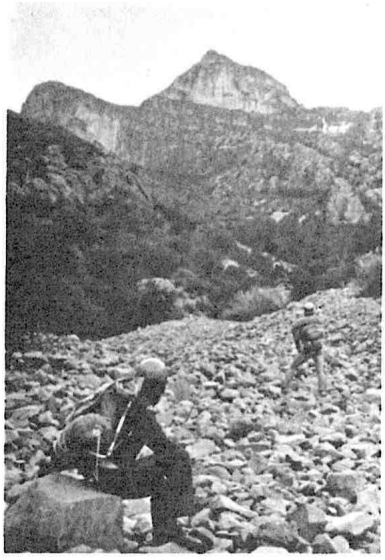
Date: January 19-21, 1973
Destination: La Gruta del Precipicio
Persons: Karen Clement, Steve Fleming, John Graves, Keith Heuss, Stan Moerbe, Wayne Russell, Mike Walsh
Reported By: Keith Heuss

We all packed into Mike's van and drove to Alice where we picked up Wayne. That night we camped in Bustamante Canyon. The next morning we

gathered our gear and headed up the talus slope. Four hours later we arrived at the cave entrance, approximately 600 meters above the camping area. This was the second time the cave had been entered. Three weeks earlier, Wayne, John, and an English caver entered the cave for the first time* The entrance crack had been seen for years and Wayne had attempted to find a route to the cave two previous times before finally finding the path of access.

Upon arriving, we all rested for a while before beginning our mission of surveying the cave. Steve, John and I took photographs in addition to the survey work. When we rappeled the 45 meter drop, we discovered we had forgotten the rope for the second drop. Stan "volunteered" to climb out and go back to the entrance to get the rope. He returned and we proceeded down the canyon passage to the 15 meter drop into the big room. We surveyed up the slope and over into the other side of the room. A pool of water was found in this portion of the big room. We finished surveying here and returned to the first drop. As we waited to climb out some in the party fell asleep. We returned to our camp at the entrance and crashed. Late next morning we hiked down and headed back home.

Surveying in Precipicio Keith Heuss



Beginning the climb to La Gruta del Precipicio Keith Heuss

View from upper talus slope of Precipicio Keith Heuss

Date: February 11-13, 1973
Destination: La Gruta del Precipicio, Bustamante Canyon
Persons: Glenn Darilek, Steve Fleming, John Graves, Mike Walsh
Reported By: Steve Fleming

We had decided to make another trip to Precipicio and take someone new along to show them the route up. Glenn had planned to go the week before but was unable to do so, so he jumped at the chance. Arriving we noted that it was very cold and awoke the next morning with generous amounts of ice on the sleeping bags. Commenting vigorously and verbally about the freezing temperature we began searching for excuses not to start the climb. After carefully examining the situation we discovered by deduction that the shiny stuff high above was indeed ice and snow on our route. Everyone was thoroughly disappointed; dirty, old man weather had spoiled our plans. Not to be totally defeated however, we proceeded to run a triangulation survey to determine the entrance height above the road. Our results showed that the cave was 610 meters above the road.

Back in Bustamante, we talked to someone who said that there had been four inches (he wasn't a metric man) of snow two days earlier in the canyon. From this bit of news we struck onward and decided to visit La Gruta del Carrizal since Glenn and John had not been there. From there we headed for Monterrey before crashing in Huasteca Canyon. We took a quick visit to Chipinque Mesa the

next day. Returning through Laredo took only about two minutes. The custom agent remarked "you're spelunkers, huh?" and let us out with no check. This is the second or third time this has happened to us at Laredo. Takes all the fun out of border crossing.

Date: February 16-18, 1973
Destination: Midnight Cave (?) and some other place out there more than likely
Persons: Keith Heuss and others(maybe)
Reported By: Keith Heuss

This is a trip to West Texas about which no one remembers where we went, what we did, or anything else. It definitely occurred because I have a card recording this fact.

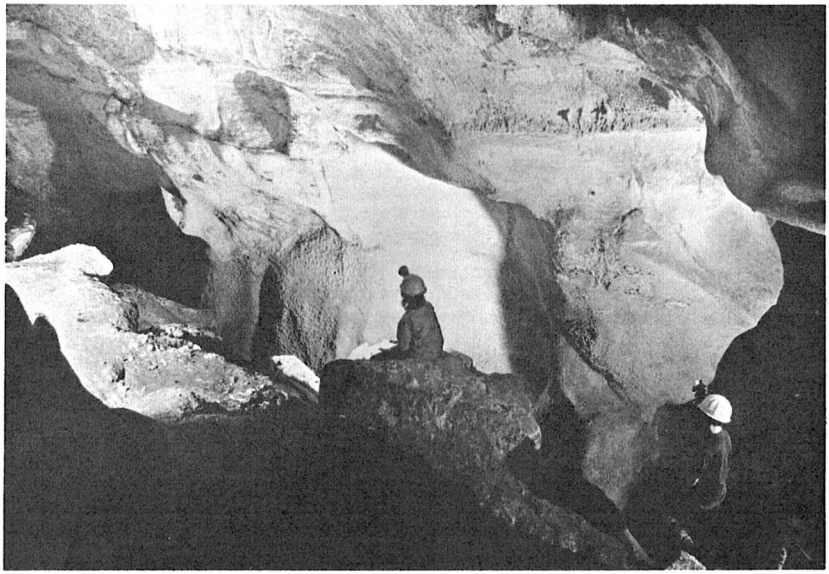
Date: Febuary 18, 1973
Destination: McCarty's Cave
Persons: Jim Haning, Keith Heuss, Mike Hill, Jeri Jones, Sandi Luker, Stan Moerbe, Dale Pate, and three other new members.
Reported By: Dale Pate

After the McCarty Lane clean-up where we picked up a lot of trash, our group went into the cave. We entered about 2:30 PM and it was misting. We went through the squeeze and on where Keith, Jim and the three new members went to the register room and Jeri, Mike, Sandi, Stan and I went to the right after the Lily Pad room. We found a crawlway and it led to a place where people have hammered before, but we could see into virgin passage. It has a lot more formations in it than in any other part of the cave. It's really pretty in fact. Another trip is planned to explore more of the cave. Everytime I go to this cave, I see something new. Fantastic. After meeting up with Keith and his group, we headed out to find it raining.

Date: February 23-25, 1973
Destination: Carta Valley
Persons: Nina Bain, Steve Fleming, Jim Haning, Blake Harrison, Robert Hemperly, Keith Heuss, Mary Kay Krauska, John Teates
Reported By: Steve Fleming

This was the first club trip of the semester. Our group met with several other grottoes at the Carta Valley triangle on Friday night and began having a good time at the expense of sleep. Saturday we moved caravan style to the metropolis of Carta Valley and then to the caves on the Pat Black Ranch. Once there, the various groups split up and went to the different caves. We decided to go into Deep Cave and see the helictite room. After spending several hours in the cave taking photos, we thought it would be nice to try and find our way out. The boneyard consumed about 20 minutes before it yielded the secret exit whereupon we returned to the good times on the surface. Later that evening Mike Walsh came hiking up the road—after he had knocked off Bambi with his van. Sunday saw us towing Mike's van to Rocksprings where it was left for repairs, and then hit the road for home.

Campsite at the Carta Valley caves — Steve Fleming



Large passage in Deep Cave — Keith Heuss

Date: March 4, 1973
Destination: Pyramid Cave
Persons: Jim Haning, Blake Harrison, Keith Heuss, Mary Kay Krauska, Stan Moerbe, Donald Spears, Mike Warton, Dan Watson
Reported By: Stan Moerbe

On invitation from Dan Watson six SWTG cavers joined Dan and Mike on a trip to Pyramid Cave. Pyramid had not been visited in approximately two years and the specific purpose of this trip was to increase the known depth and also find a connection between the upper and lower levels.

We spent Friday night at a fantastic campground on the Nueces River and entered the cave at noon Saturday. Eight hours later everyone exited the cave but Dan. After waiting several minutes Mike returned to help Dan with a new crawl which had to be opened up with a hammer. They finally left the cave about two hours later after having reached what they considered a deeper part of the cave than that previously known. All attempts to link the two levels failed. We also failed in our attempt to talk with the landowner as he was not at home as we arrived or as we left. Luckily Dan had called and received permission earlier in the week.

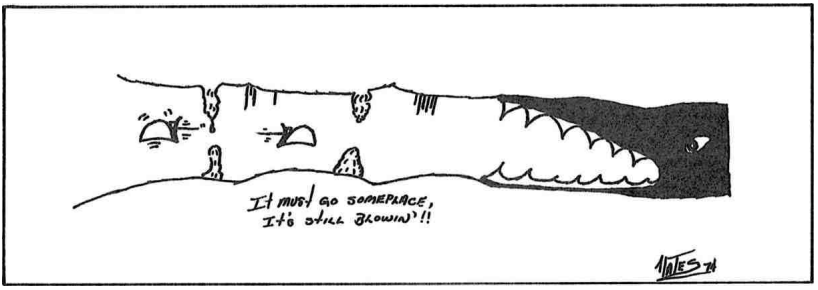
Supposedly everyone enjoyed the many hours crawling around in the small passageways of the cave but all were happy to return to the campground for some BS and sleep. The return home Sunday was uneventful.

Date: March 7, 1973
Destination: Woodcreek, Five New Caves
Persons: Jeri Jones, Steve Kubala, Dale Pate, Dr. Rex Peterson, John Teates, Paul Villaret
Reported By: Dale Pate

We met at the Geography Department on campus and using Steve's car, we drove to Woodcreek located outside of Wimberly. We were shown five caves. The first was about 10 or 12 feet deep and 3 feet in diameter. The second cave was 10 feet deep and 6 feet in diameter. The third cave was the largest and it was about 60 feet long and 30 feet deep. The width varied from 6 to 10 feet. The fourth cave was a small fault that could barely be crawled into. The fifth cave was about 15 feet deep and 10 feet wide. All the caves were found in parallel fissures which were located about 150 feet apart. This added five new caves known in Hays County.

Date: April 20-21, 1973
Destination: Fischers Fissure, Vance Cave, Fountain Cave
Persons: Larry Doreck, Robert Hemperly, Keith Heuss, Mary Kay Krauska
Reported by: Keith Heuss

Friday we drove to the Pecos River Bridge where we spent the night. Saturday morning we spent about five hours in Fischers Fissure. We headed back to San Marcos with the possibility of stopping at some caves near Rocksprings. Looking through the Edwards County survey we saw two caves, Vance Cave and Fountain Cave, which looked worth while. We located Vance Cave in the roadcut along highway 335 but we decided to go to Fountain Cave first. The owner showed us the hill the cave was on and we headed out. It became too dark before we located the cave so we decided to make a return trip later. We arrived back in San Marcos at 1:00 A.M. Sunday morning.



Date: April 29, 1973
Destination: Boyett's Cave
Persons: Chuck Stuehm, Steve Fleming, Gary Parsons, Frank Sodek, Jane Laurens, others
Reported By: Jane Laurens

We arrived at the cave and started to prepare for the descent. There is a vertical drop of approximately 20 feet. A couple chimneyed down, some used the ladder with no belay rope, and the rest used the ladder with a belay rope. Because of a slight case of nerves, I used a belay rope.

At the end of the 20 foot descent is what could be called the second level. There is a level about 8 to 10 feet above the second level, and a level about 8 to 10 feet below the second level. Getting to the first level was a fairly easy climb for me, but then I had the dubious pleasure of learning to chimney down to the third level.

After landing intact on the third level, we found a nice lake which has extremely frigid water, and no passages leading out of it. There is a passage in front of the lake though, which leads to a small roan with its own vertical exit.

On the first level there are two passages which eventually connect. On one side there are some really beautiful formations, and the other side has good promise for further exploration.

We finally made the ascent which unfortunately turned out to be more demanding for myself. Complete exhaustion doesn't help when one is trying to ascend a ladder, especially for the first time. Finally everyone was out and we headed back for San Marcos, very dirty, hungry, and tired.

An added thrill to the day occurred after we had eaten in a fried chicken place. A young man came out wondering what we were. The general concensus of his group of friends was that we were oil-diggers. We of course explained to him and his friends what we were, and they went away very satisfied that they had met some real cavers.

Date: April 29, 1973
Destination: Boyett's Cave
Persons: About eight from AAC, two from SWT, four from Temple, and four from A&I
Reported By: Glenn Darilek

After the TSA Convention, there were some of us who went caving. Most of us were able to see a good portion of this nice cave and its crawlways, chimneys, and lake room. The register was rusted shut, and needs some repair.

Date: May 24-27, 1973
Destination: Diablo Cave, Fawcett's Cave, Quigg Sinkhole, Langtry Lead
Persons: Glenn, Ruth & Paul Darilek, Steve Fleming, John Graves, Keith Heuss, Greg Passmore, Mike & Linda Walsh
Reported by: Keith Heuss

Thursday afternoon at 3:00 P.M. Steve and I departed San Antonio to meet up with Mike in Castroville. We followed Mike to Amistad Dam. By 7:30 we were ready to set out in search for Diablo Cave. The road along the river has been blocked off since the last time we were in the area so we were forced to walk. The road is along what used to be the railroad. We reached a bridge about 1/2 mile down the road from our vans. According to our notes Diablo Cave is located near railroad bridge number 390.31, but no number could be found on the bridge. We saw a small sink area down the road and to the left so we checked it out. We went about twenty meters down the passage in the back of the sink and saw it continued so we returned to the road to contemplate matters. After a while Mike decided that Diablo Cave was further down the road so he took out walking. After following Mike about 1/4 mile Steve and I decided to return to the vans to check our notes more closely. The closer we checked the more we were convinced that we had found Diablo Cave. About this time a guard from the dam drove up. We talked to him and he told us that we had found the cave. He told us he has been working in the area since construction began on the dam and offered to give us some more information on the cave. We followed him to the top of the dam where the road cuts off to go below the dam. We got out and looked down on the area and he began explaining the operation as follows: The Corps of Engineers explored and surveyed the cave to the point where it was too narrow to negotiate. They then returned to the surface and found the point on the surface the cave became too small to explore. They drilled coreholes beginning here and following the cave to the location the dam was to be constructed. At this point the cave had to be sealed to prevent the water from the lake from draining through the cave. Most of the coreholes hit passageway which was not high enough to enter.

He pointed out the coreholes on the surface where the cave forked. One passageway runs towards highway 90 and the other is the passage which runs under the dam. The passage which goes under the dam has a large corehole in it about 150 meters from the dam. About a year ago, before the area was fenced off Steve and I were in the area and made the following observations at the corehole: The .7m core is at the lower end of a drain trench which is about 4 meters deep at the lower end. The bottom slopes upwards and meets the surface about 10 meters from the far end. Seepage water from the lake collects in the area and small ditches direct it to the trench where it enters the corehole. We lowered a tape into the corehole and it measured 15 meters to the water level. The water was about 1/2 meter deep and there was an air space about 1/2

meter high above the water. An iron bar grate covers the corehole to prevent logs from washing in. This water enters the cave at a point far beyond the point where the passageway becomes too low to explore.

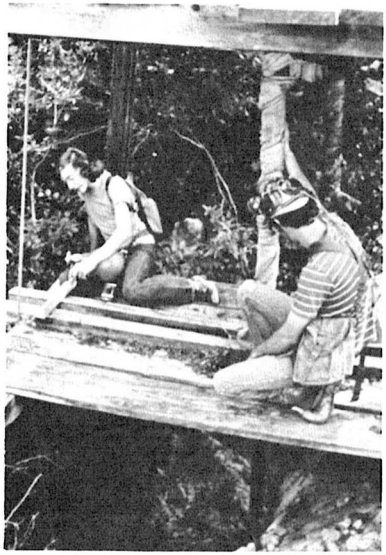
On this trip the trench was about half full of water. The guard also gave us the name of the owner, B.M. Brite, Del Rio, and offered to let us use the phone at the office to call him. We talked to the owner and he was quite negative about letting anyone in. He told us that on many occasions airmen from the base hop the fence and go into the cave. The guard told us that the office (International Boundry and Water Commission, Amistad Dam Office) had more information on the cave. The resident geologist for the dam is Dick Price. We thanked him for his help and drove back to Mike's van and waited for him. He came walking in at 11:00 P.M. We told him what we had found out. Plans were to camp below the dam but mosquitos were everywhere so we drove out 277/377 to the Rough Canyon cut off to camp.

We spent most of Friday morning chasing Mike back and forth between Del Rio and the Rough Canyon turn off. We finally arrived at Loma Alta by 11:00. Mike talked to the attendent at the Exxon station and we got some information on some area caves. He told us that Dee Harrison, the new owner of Quigg Sinkhole was going to be working at the station at 4:00 that afternoon. We proceeded to RNK ranch and Fawcett's Cave making a road log as we drove. At this ranch we found out the owner, Ron N. Kuhlman, lives in Houston. We called him and secured permission to enter the cave and waited for one of the ranch hands to show us the cave. We and our guide, David Bailey, entered the cave at 2:00 P.M. The ten meter chimney entrance was easily negotiated by all. We were very impressed with this very decorated cave. We spent two hours exploring the cave and taking photographs. David told us he takes quite a few ranch visitors to the cave.

We returned to the Exxon station to talk to Dee Harrison. He gave us permission to enter Quigg Sinkhole and was quite concerned on the condition of the tank at the bottom of the drop. We didn't have time to enter the cave today but we did have time to locate the cave and make a road log to the cave entrance. We returned the gate key to him and headed out for Amistad Dam where we were to meet Glenn and Forrest. Glenn arrived at 11:30. JUst before midnight the guard came around and told us the bridge was going to be locked at midnight. We waited a little longer but Forrest never arrived so we left. We spent the night at the roadside park north of Loma Alta.

Saturday morning we talked to Dee Harrison again and secured the key and drove to Quigg Sinkhole. Mike, John, Steve, Glenn, Greg and I entered the 37 meter drop while Linda, Ruth and Paul remained on the surface. Our five hours in the cave were spent exploring, taking photographs and making biological observations. We pushed most of the crevices around the entrance room. All but one ended in breakdown fill. Two scorpions, four frogs and many cave crickets and daddy longlegs were found. We returned the key to the owner and drove to the Pecos River Bridge for the night.

Sunday morning we drove to Langtry Lead. Mike, Steve, Greg, Ruth, John, and I entered the cave. Four goats were rescued from the entrance sink and the cave. We got as far as the low crawlway passageway before we ran into water. John wasn't stopped so he got completely soaked. He came back when no one wanted to follow him through the water. We returned to Langtry and discussed the return trip. We decided to take back country roads as much as possible rather than highway 90.

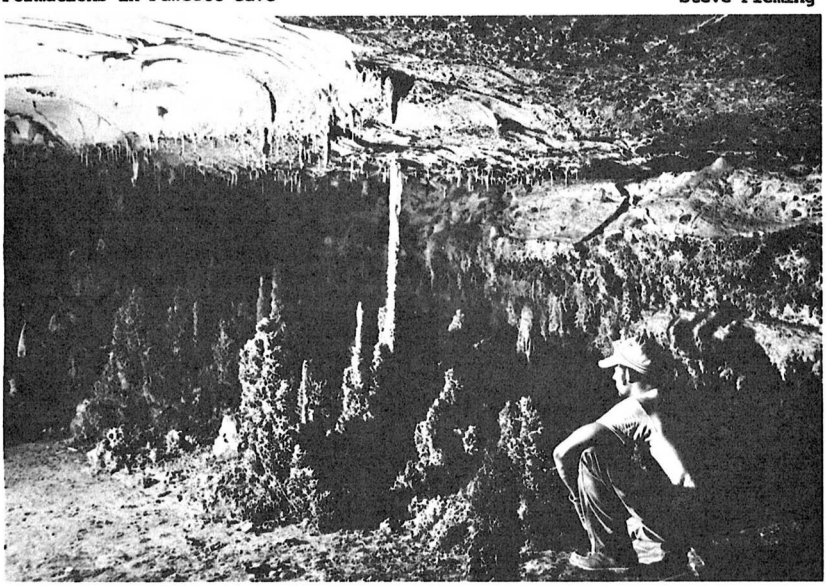


Entrance pit of Quigg Sinkhole

Climbing out of Quigg Sinkhole

Formations in Fawcett Cave

Steve Fleming



Date: JUne 2, 1973
Destination: Cataract and Corkscrew Caves
Persons: Al Brandt, Steve Fleming, John Graves, Forrest Smith
Reported By: Steve Fleming

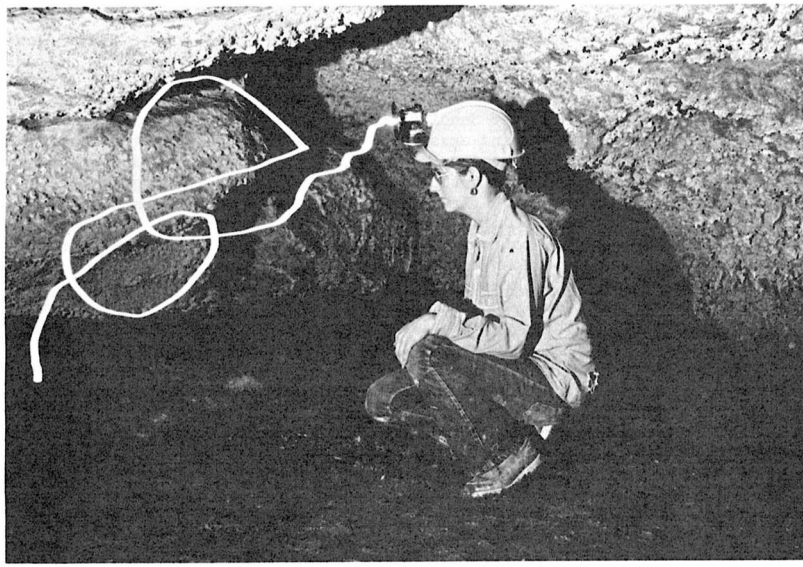
Forrest called me Friday afternoon wanting to know if I wanted to go to Cataract Cave in Medina Co. After being informed that we would survey the cave and that there was a serious lack of personnel, I agreed to go along. Rounding up John, we met Forrest and Al on the West side of town and continued in that direction. Things were going fine until we talked to the owner, or who we thought was the owner. Turned out that our contact was the owner's brother and he smilingly denied us access. Falling back and regrouping, we next tried to think of someplace to go so that the day would not be totally wasted. The tedium of decision-making forced us to the nearest refreshment stand where Forrest kept putting forth cave names and I kept trying to discourage any more roaming. Being overruled (with John now dissenting) we headed for the Kerrville area. Before getting that far we exited on Cascade Caverns Road and turned back toward Corkscrew. Finally getting into a cave, we went thru the whole thing, including the Mud Room, which was slightly hard to negotiate because the ladder is lying in splinters on the floor. On the way out we stumbled into the dynamited section, and, being thoroughly amazed at where it went, followed it all the way back down to the water. Because I was the first one to the water passage I was given numerous encouragements as I pressed forward, knowing full well that John and Forrest were plotting against me so they could stay dry. After squirming for approximately 15 m. thru confining passage I managed to become stuck by the rapidly closing walls. Fifteen minutes, generous donations of skin, and a large number of sore ribs later, we were able to head back for the surface to change clothes and pick ticks off our bodies.

Date: June 22-24, 1973
Destination: Fawcett's Cave, Quigg Sinkhole
Persons: Steve Fleming, Keith Heuss, Mary Kay Krauska, Sandi Luker, Stan Moerbe
Reported By: Keith Heuss

We left San Antonio Friday at about 8:00 pm and spent the night at the roadside park north of Loma Alta.

Saturday morning we stopped at Dee Harrison's but he was in Del Rio so we drove out to the RNK Ranch. We talked to Ron Kuhlman for a while. By noon we returned to Loma Alta where we called Dee to get permission to enter Quigg Sinkhole. At 2:00 pm we entered the cave and spent eight hours exploring, mapping, and taking photographs. Stan chimneyed the crevice where the water pipe runs which carries water from the spring to the tank at the bottom of the drop. Steve followed him across and they went to the end of the crevice. The canyon measures 22.9 meters from the pipe to the bottom of the lower room. Some more passage was found at the bottom of the lower room. A crawlway leads out about 8 meters where 8 meters of chimneying leads into walking passageway which leads back under the lower room from which the crawlway was entered. After climbing out the 35 meter drop we returned to the roadside park and were disturbed all night by the truck drivers blowing their horns as they passed.

Sunday we returned to the RWK Ranch where we spent about three hours in Fawcett's Cave.

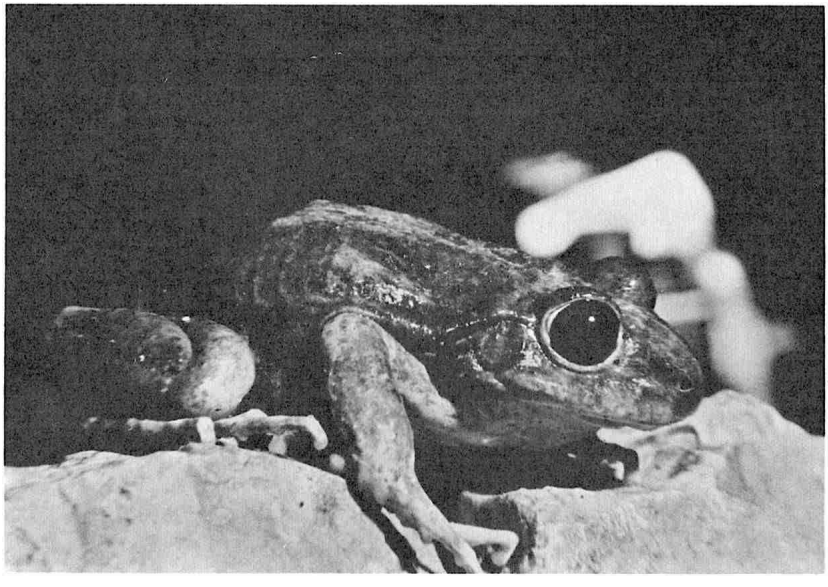


Sandi and her carbide laser
Keith Heuss

Mary Kay admiring a Fawcett formation

Date: JUly 13-15, 1973
Destination: Quigg Sinkhole
Persons: John Graves, Stan Moerbe, Dale Pate
Reported By: Dale Pate

I arrived in San Antonio at Sandi»s house at 10:00 PM. After staying there awhile, Stan and I left and crashed at Stan»s place. Too early Saturday morning we picked John up and headed to Del Rio. From Del Rio we drove to Loma Alta and the ranch where we obtained permission to enter Quigg Sinkhole. Upon entering, we got off on the first ledge and explored the upper level. My carbide flooded out at this point. We then rappelled down to the bottom avoiding the large water tank at the bottom. After taking about 12 pictures of a frog, we explored more passages. John and Stan did some chimneying while my carbide flooded out again. We prussiked out and headed to the owners house and then on to a roadside park to eat. It was here John discovered his gear was missing. In order not to disturb the owner we hiked to the cave and found his gear and got back to the car just as the sun was setting. After a terrible night of trying to sleep we headed home.



Subterranean Frog Dale Pate

Date: JUly 21-22, 1973
Destination: Lake Amistad
Persons: Keith Heuss, Jeri Jones, Sandi Luker, Mike Walsh
Reported By: Keith Heuss

The four of us towed my dad's 16 foot boat to Lake Amistad. Saturday morning we put in on the west side of the river at the Pecos River Bridge. That morning we drove up the Pecos River a bit further than the railroad bridge. We made numerous stops at shelters on both sides of the river. Indian pictographs are in most of the shelters we stopped at. That afternoon we drove north to Langtry via the Rio Grande stopping first at the railroad tunnel just north of the intersection of the Pecos and the Rio Grande. We did not find too many shelters with pictographs on this section of the river. Somewhere approximately halfway between the Pecos River and Langtry. I entered a short crawlway on the American side of the river. We spent Saturday night under the Pecos River bridge. Sunday morning we headed back to San Marcos.

Pictograph on the Pecos River

Date: July 29, 1973
Destination: McCarty Cave
Persons: Stan Moerbe, Dale Pate, Dwain Thiele
Reported By: Dale Pate

After dropping Sandi at the campus to study, we headed for the cave. We arrived at the entrance and after taking a picture, we started through. We went through the main parts of the cave and also through some parts that weren't so main. We stayed in the cave about 3 hours and had a very enjoyable trip.

Keith Heuss

Date: August 5, 1973
Destination: Gorman Cave
Persons: Keith Heuss, Ed and Anne Jacoby, Mike and Linda Walsh
Reported By: Keith Heuss

We went into the first section of Gorman and stopped at Separation Lake since no one was overly anxious to get wet* Exiting, we spent some time below the waterfall taking photos and getting thoroughly sprayed。

Date: August 22-26, 1973
Destination: San Luis Potosi and surrounding area
Persons: John Graves, Keith Heuss, Robert Hemperly, Mike Walsh
Reported By: John Graves

Early Thursday morning we arrived in San Luis Potosi, After resting and "touristing" for several hours we drove east toward Rio Verde, At Sta. Domingo we took the Las Cuevas Minas road south. After 32 kilometers we arrived at the Las Cuevas Minas Mine, After inquiring about caves at the mine we drove north on the road to La Puente. About 1 kilometer past the mine we found a large sink area and sotano in a short valley to the right. Exploration was impossible due to the rather large volume of water flowing into the entrance, A few kilometers down the road we stopped and hiked around for several hours. The limestone in this area is very promising but nothing of any significance was found. After a day of trying to drive through to La Puente we found ourselves hopelessly stuck in the mud. The "Big Boss" at the mine spoke fairly good English and he assured us that as soon as the road dried out he would send some men from the mine with a 4 wheel drive truck to pull Mike's van out. After taking him at his word and knowing the rain would not stop for several days, Mike and Keith went to Valles and Robert and I returned home.

Date: August 28-29, 1973
Destination: Goat Shelter Fissure, Real County; Vance Cave, Edwards County
Persons: Robert Hemperly, Dale Pate
Reported By: Dale Pate

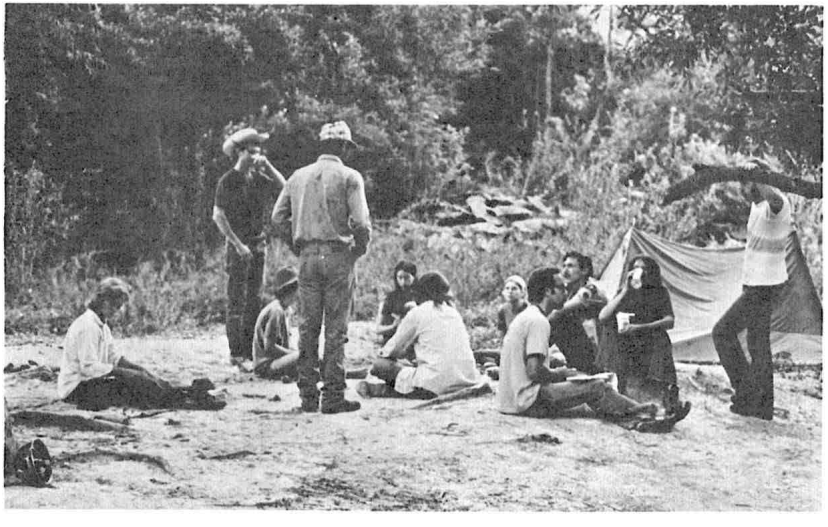
We left about 4:00 Tuesday afternoon after I registered and headed for Austin. In Austin we saw Neal Morris and then headed west. We stopped in Ingram and went swimming and dam sliding. Then we drove to Del Rio and the Carta Valley triangle. We tried to get into Midnight Cave but couldn't, so we headed for Vance Cave. On the way there, we stopped and looked at several shelters and also found a cave. We named it Goat Shelter Fissure. It had two entrances and was about 7 meters in length. We then drove North until we found Vance Cave. We crawled around in there for about an hour and came out and headed for Ingram once more and then San Marcos.

Date: September 1-3, 1973
Destination: La Gruta del Palmito, La Cueva in El Canon de Bustamante
Persons: John Graves, Robert Hemperly, Jeri Jones, Mary Kay Krauska, Sandi Luker, Stan Moerbe, Dale Pate, Dwain Thiele, Mike Walsh, and many others.
Reported By: Dale Pate

Mary Kay, Robert, Dwain, and I left in Robert's car and got in with Mike in Laredo. Many cavers were tryihg to get across the border and eventually everyone make it to the campground in Bustamante. There were groups from A&I, Austin, San Antonio, Dallas, Waco, Pan American, San Marcos, and probably other places. Saturday part of our group headed for Palmito. Many others were doing the same cave also. The highlight of the trip was visiting the Birthday Passage. Craig Bittinger and his friend Pat gave us the tour. We spent from 8 to 9 hours in the cave.

The next morning Stan, Dwain, and I starting hiking up the mountain to look for more caves further on past Precipicio. Dwain decided he couldn't make it so Stan and I went on without him. We had to crash through the jungle after we got to the end of the trail. We hiked to a cave we saw that had an entrance of about 70* by 15'. The cave turned out to go only about 100 feet back, but it had an extremely impressive entrance. After crashing back through the jungle we managed to get back down the mountain and back to camp. We had spent about 6 hours hiking.

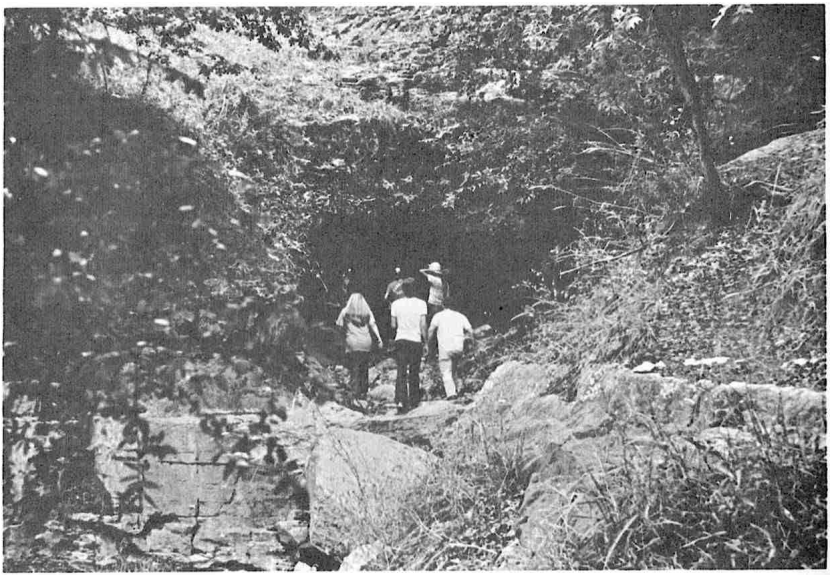
After swimming and taking a nap, Stan, Dwain, Sandi, and I headed for town where we ate Huevos con Chariso(They ran out of everything else.) We made it back to camp, crashed, and the next morning everyone got up and left for the States. Mexico was beautiful.



Bustamante Canyon campground Dale Pate

Date: September 8-9, 1973
Destination: Gorman Falls Cave
Persons: Nina Bain, Sherry Carpenter, Jim Haning, Robert Hemperly, Keith Heuss, Katie Monahan, Janel Nye, Dale Pate
Reported By: Dale Pate

]rle picked up everyone Saturday morning and then headed for Bend, Texas. This was a trip to introduce the new members to caving. We met three more carloads from San Marcos at the campground. After playing in the waterfall for awhile, everyone headed to the cave. We were in the cave for two hours and went as far as the bad air permitted. We held a rope session after everyone got out. That night we sat around the campfire and got to know each other a little bit better. The next morning we had another rope session and then headed for San Marcos•



Gorman Cave Dale Pate

Date: September 16, 1973
Destination: McCarty Cave
Persons: Robert Hemperly, Keith Heuss, Dan Maddox, Katie Monahan, Janel Nye, Dale Pate, Bill Thomas
Reported By: Dale Pate

We took the long way around the gate because we didn't have the key. We spent 2-3 hours crawling over rocks and through the mud and generally having a good time. The excitement of the trip for me was when Dan knocked a 40-lb boulder off onto my head. It smashed up Stan's carbide lamp pretty good.

Date: September 21-23, 1973
Destination: Langtry Lead Cave, Emerald Sink, Langtry Quarry Cave, Moorehead Cave
Persons: Jane Erickson, Robert Hemperly, Keith Heuss, Jim Haning, Mary Kay Krauska, Katie Monahan, Janel Nye, Dale Pate, Tom Wright, and two others.
Reported By: Dale Pate

Starting to pick people up at 3:00 Friday, we were able to leave San Marcos by 5:30. We drove to the Pecos High Water Bridge where we spent the night. Steve Fleming met us here. The next morning we got up and headed to Langtry Lead. Mike Walsh, John Graves, and others were already there. We were able to go all the way to the Hall of the Unicorns. After staying there for about 3 hours we came out and drove over to Emerald Sink. We went as far as the top of the 142* drop where we threw down rocks and listened to the fine echoes it emitted. We came out and decided to visit the entrance to Langtry Quarry. At the entrance we picked up some nice pieces of Boquillas Flag Shale that had been quarried. We then drove back to the Pecos Bridge where we talked to a National Park Ranger. After this, we hiked down into the Canyon and visited Moorehead Cave. Robert caught a small Rattler there and we departed only after Robert let the snake go. Sunday saw us in Ingram swimming and dam-sliding and finally making it home.

Entrance to Emerald Sink

Dale Pate

Date: September 21-23, 1973
Destination: Langtry Caves and H.T. Miers
Persons: Jodi Hestand, Jeri Jones, John Graves, Steve Fleming, Mike Walsh
Reported By: Mike Walsh

After we picked up John we left San Antonio around 11:00 Friday night. We crashed at the High River Bridge. Early Saturday we pushed Langtry Lead to the Unicorn room. Later we visited Emerald Sink, Langtry Quarry, Fischer's Fissure and Gardner's Fall Pit. We spent the night at H.T. Miers ranch. The next day we visited the cave. After a trip to Gamer State Park we returned home.

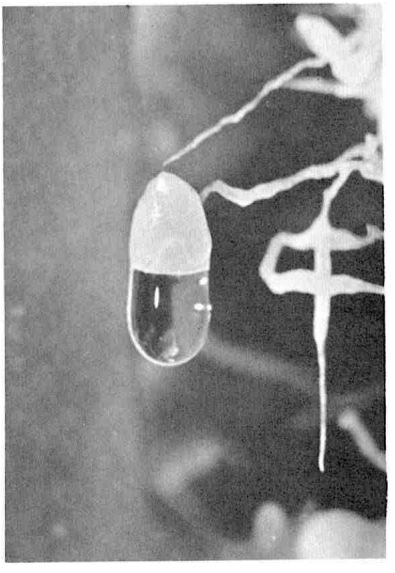
Date: October 5-7, 1973
Destination: Dunbar Cave
Persons: Jim Haning, Keith Heuss, Sylvia Hurd, Katie Monahan, Janel Nye, Dale Pate
Reported By: Dale Pate

We got off to an early start and arrived at the Carta Valley Triangle some time that night. It started raining at this point and by morning everyone had ended up in the van. The next mowing we tried to get into Midnight but unsuccessfully. We then headed for Punken, Blow Hole, and Deep Caves only to find the road totally grossed out from the rain. We stopped at Dunbar cave and spent several hours exploring the drop. The passages were very nice and Keith even took his Coleman lantern in the cave for a ways. The night was spent at Gamer State Park and we arrived back in San Marcos early the next day.

Rappeling into Dunbar Cave

Keith Heuss

Helictite in the Birthday Passage



Dale Pate

Date: Octdber 12-14, 1973
Destination: La Gruta del Palmito
Persons: Keith Heuss, Sandi Luker, Stan Moerbe, Dale Pate
Reported By: Dale Pate

Keith and I left San Marcos by 6:15 PM and got to Sandi*s an hour later. From there we went over to Stan's. From there we headed for Mexico. Our objective for this trip was to go to the Birthday Passage and take many photographs of the fanciful and delicate formations.

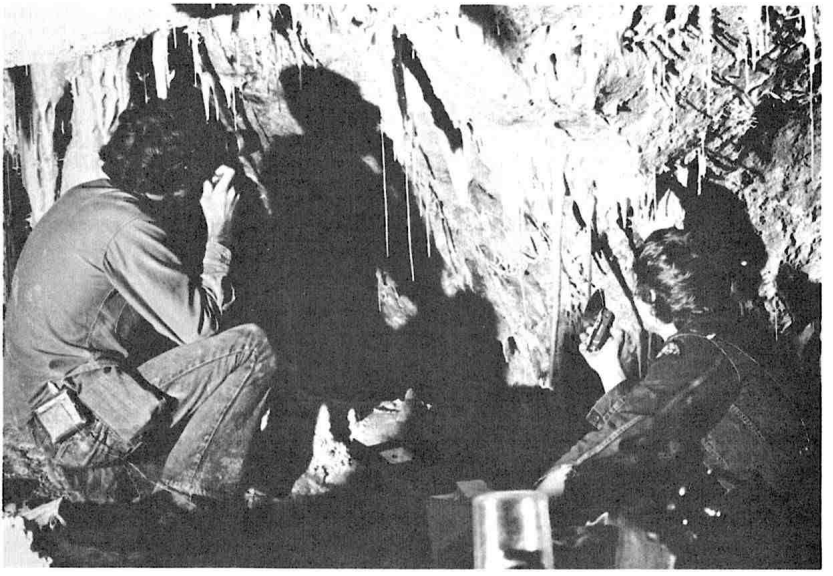
We arrived at the border where we found Mike Walsh and a group with him just ahead of us in line. From there we headed for Sabinas Hidalgo and the campground of Ojo de Aqua. Mike drove up right behind us and we found the place locked. We then drove to Bustamante and crashed outside the town. It was about 4:00 AM by this time and it was misting.

We woke up and found it still misting. We drove into town and paid 30 pesos for our group to go into the cave. We drove to the cave and started the hike up. Keith and I were trying out our new small backpacks. A large group of young Mexican boys passed us on the way up. Once we got up we started into the cave. We got halfway down the big slope when everyone was exiting the cave. We headed on down the slope and after taking a few pictures, we arrived at the bottom of the slope that led to the Birthday Passage. Stan climbed up and rigged it and soon all of us were up to the top. From here on we spent from 5-6 hours taking pictures. We ended up taking a total of about 90 pictures in the Birthday Passage. The majority of the pictures were of the water drops hanging from the extremely delicate helictites.

After eating some chocolate pudding we started out of the Birthday Passage and back to the entrance of the cave. The spring was putting out quite a bit more water now than it had been when we came into the cave. Also we arrived there to find a small stream pouring into the cave and it was extremely wet outside. Hiking back in the rainy mist was really <u>great</u>. We got back to the car and changed clothes and headed for the States. We only made it as far as Ojo de Aqua where we crashed. The next morning we got up and drove into Sabinas Hidalgo where we ate breakfast and then drove back to the States and San Marcos. We had spent a total of 9-10 hours in the cave and had accomplished our goal for the trip.

Date: October 12-14, 1973
Destination: Villa Garcia Canyon
Persons: Jeri Jones, Ed and Anne Jacoby, Jodi Hestand, Walter Miller, Mike Walsh, Bob Finger
Reported By: Mike Walsh

Since the weather was bad in the states we went to Mexico to check a cave lead near Villa Garcia. We spent Friday night in Bustamante Canyon, the next morning bad weather set in. Hoping that the weather would clear we visited the commercial cave. After a good visit we saw that we still had bad weather. Nevertheless, we went in search of La Nevada and La Bruja, two caves in the canyon. Much to our surprise we found La Nevada, the larger of the two. The entrance room is about one-fourth the size of the entrance room in Salitre. We plan on pushing the cave when we return to map it. We partied in Monterrey that night and went to La Boca Sunday and returned to the states.



At work in the Birthday Passage Sandi Luker

Date: October 18, 1973
Destination: Academy Cave
Persons: SWTG new members and some older
Reported By: Mike Walsh

After making the decision to get together every other week to work on SWTG trip reports, articles, maps, publications, etc., everyone met at my house. We had 14 cavers there giving information on Hays County, Mexico, Texas and caving in general. Following the meeting we visited Academy Cave.

Date: October 20, 1973
Destination: Boyett's and Ash Cave
Persons: Walter Miller, Bill Berry, Roger ?, William Ballard, Bill Thomas, Katie Monahan, Janel Nye, Kathy Ann Richardson, JoAnn Haning, Sylvia Hurd
Reported By: Walter Miller

We started out about 9:00 am and went to Boyett's first. We spent quite a bit of our time at Boyett's. We then went to Ash Cave which we had a little trouble locating due to a change in ownership. The new owner was very friendly and we had no trouble getting in. We cleaned the cave out because debris had washed in. We then went to Five Mile Dam where we had a refreshing swim.

Date: October 21, 1973
Destination: Ranch near Bulverde, TX
Persons: Walter Miller, Mike Walsh, Jeri Jones, Brian Peterson, Bill Berry, Steve Fleming, Roger ?, James Overcash
Reported By: Walter Miller

We started out from Mike Walsh's house with intentions of going to Corkscrew but we arrived there to find that the cave was taking too much water and that we could only obtain entrance by working through the Central Catholic High School group in San Antonio. Well, our day wasn't spoiled because we had an alternate plan!

We proceeded to a ranch which wasn't very far from where we were. We arrived at the ranch about 2:00 pm and after a brief talk, the owner showed us five holes on his land. The second was a pit of about 15 meters which was taking on quite a bit of water with a passage leading off. The third was a blind pit of about 9 meters. The fourth was a small drop of about 3 meters and a crawl of about 9 meters which dead-ended. We had asked the owner's wife three days before if we could come visit their caves and when we arrived, we found that she had baked us a cake. After cake and coffee, we visited a fifth hole which was about 12 meters deep and was just above a creek on the land. There were a couple of other holes on the land but due to the time element we had to leave. We plan to return and do a complete survey of the land and the caves. The people that own the land are the most friendly and hospitable landowners I have ever known.

Date: October 24, 1973
Destination: McCarty Cave
Persons: Keith Heuss, Sandi Luker, Dale Pate, Kathy Ann Richardson, 7 girl scouts and 2 leaders
Reported By: Dale Pate

We met at the Methodist Church and everyone left for the cave. We used the key to go through the gate for once and took the girls back to the register room where we all experienced total darkness. We then headed out. All the girls seemed to enjoy the trip. We were in the cave for about 2% hours.

Date: October 25, 1973
Destination: McCarty Cave
Persons: Jim Haning, JoAnn Haning, Sylvia Hurd, Jeri Jones, Cooter Overcash
Reported By: Jim Haning

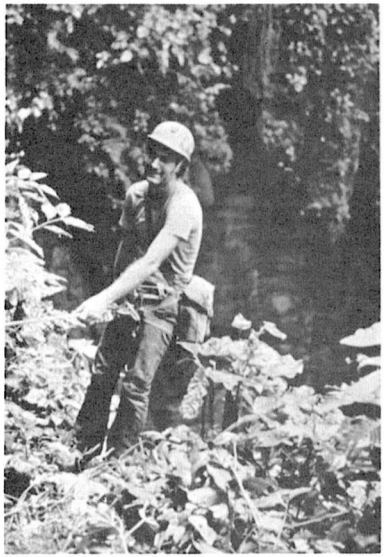
We left San Marcos for McCarty at about 1:00 pm. After entering the cave we proceeded rather quickly to the register room and beyond. The mud was unbelievably slimy, even for McCarty, as Cooter can readily testify. We rested awhile in the back room and then painfully proceeded out. On the way back, we drove to the college farm, and discovered that Jeri's horse was totally appalled by bat guano. Finally we reached San Marcos and gleefully set to clogging our shower drains with McCarty grunge.

Date: October 26-28, 1973
Destination: Fawcett Cave
Persons: Mary Harris, Robert Hemperly, Keith Heuss, Sylvia Hurd, Katie Monahan, Janel Nye, Dale Pate
Reported By: Dale Pate

We drove out to the Triangle near Carta Valley and spent the night. The next morning we tried to get into Midnight Cave, Blowhole, Punkin, and Deep Caves with no success. We then decided to head out to see if we could get into Fawcett Cave. The owner was very friendly and let us go in. Robert found two snakes at the entrance and we entered the cave. The entrance chimney was negotiated and we started taking pictures as soon as we got in. We headed one way until the passage turned into crawling. With a little bit of digging, -the passage could really go. Heading the other direction the cave really got large and branched out quite a bit. There were quite a few active formations in the cave. We headed out and drove back to the triangle. The next day, Sunday, we drove to Ingram where some went swimming and dam sliding.

Date: November 21-25, 1973
Destination: Cueva de la Virgin, Nacimiento del Rio Choy, Sotano del Japones, Sotano del Huitzmolotitla
Persons: Blake Harrison, Robert Hemperly, Stan Moerbe, Dale Pate, Pete Strickland, Larry Wiggins
Reported By: Dale Pate

Blake, Pete, and Larry picked up Robert and I about two hours late and after messing around, we headed for S.A. where we picked Stan up. Approximately 17 hours later we arrived in Valles. That afternoon we drove to the railroad tracks and hiked to Cueva de la Virgin and the Nacimiento del Rio Choy. The Choy was really fine. We swam and had a great time. That night we stayed at the Los Sabinos campground. The next morning we got up and headed for Sotano del Japones. We did an 80* drop close to the entrance and got to walk thru vampire bats. Niffy. From there we did another 110* drop and further on an 80* drop. This drop was to water and we started wading and only had to swim in one place. Stan and Blake checked out 2 pits which led to water and we mapped about 600’ of passage back to where the survey had ended. From there we headed out of the cave and we arrived back at the entrance about 8 to 9 hours after we had entered. From there we hiked back to the van and drove to Los Sabinos again. Frank Binney and a group had arrived there the night before. The next morning we got up and Robert and I ate breakfast in Valles with Frank and then Blake and group picked us up and we headed for Xilitla and Sotano del Huitzmolotitla. After stopping to buy some honey and to buy some hand carved wooden objects, we arrived at Xilitla and the pit at about 3:00 pm. Lacking time and rope, Stan, Robert, Blake, and Pete went down the first drop which was about 300' and came back up. From there we headed back to Valles and outside of Valles we got searched for weapons by the Federales. Exciting! We spent the night in Los Sabinos once again and we headed for the States. After two flats we arrived at the border and with a little hassle we made it back to S.A. only to have another flat. We made it home after a drive of 16-17 hours.

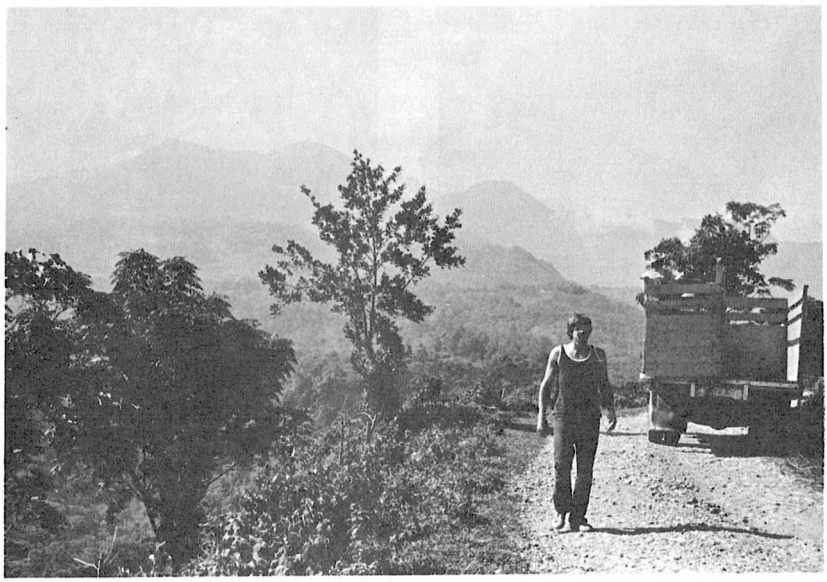


Sotano de Huitzmolotitla

Dale Pate

Xilitla-Tlamaya road

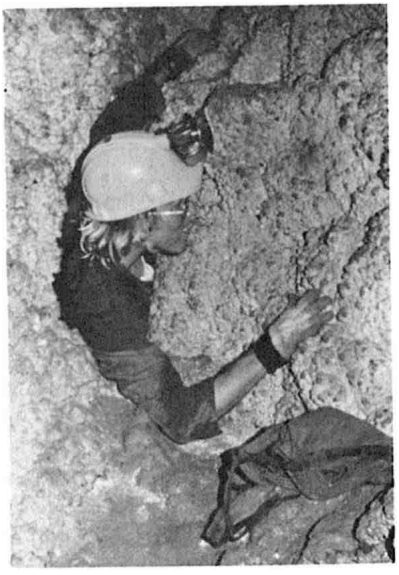
Dale Pate



Date: November 30-December 2, 1973
Destination: La Gruta del Palmito, La Gruta de Carrizol
Persons: William Ballard, Debbie Flanagan, Keith Heuss, Mike Hill, Slyvia Hurd, Frances McCauley, Katie Monahan, Janel Nye, Hal Odum, Dale Pate, Frank Sodek, Bill Thomas
Reported By: Dale Pate

We left San Marcos by 5:00 Friday afternoon traveling in 3 different vehicles We arrived at the border and with little trouble we got across. We drove to a campground outside of Bustamante and met John Graves and a group with him. Hie next morning we headed for La Gruta del Palmito while John and his group headed for Precipicio. We spent 4 hours in Palmito and took several pictures. We even made it out while it was still light. We had gone all the way to the New Passage. After getting out, we drove to Ojo de Aqua and crashed there for the night. Also there was Tom Wright and several carloads from A&I as well as John and his group at the campground. The next morning we got up and after a long delay we headed for La Gruta del Carrizal. We found the owner and he took us to the cave and was very nice. We went into the cave and went to the cold water siphon. We swam out the deep water entrance and then went swimming in the stream outside. After cleaning up we all headed back for San Marcos.

A tight spot in Palmito



Keith Heuss

Hiking to Cuesta

Steve Fleming

Date: December 26, 1973-January 6, 1974
Destination: Mexico
Persons: Keith Heuss, Mike Hill, Hal Odum, Dale Pate
Reported By: Dale Pate

December 26, 1973

Keith, Mike, and Hal picked me up at Petronila and after stopping in Kingsville we were on our way. We had very little trouble at the border and arrived in Los Sabinos at 4:30 in the morning.

December 27, 1973

After talking to some people from the north who had been to El Sotano and Golondrinas and also*talking to Jim and Julie Rodemaker, we headed to Tamuin to look for the pyramids supposedly near there. We never found them, but we had a nice drive through the country. Coming back into Valles we stopped at Cueva de Taninul #4. We came back into town and found that a lot of cavers were at Los Sabinos. Blake Harrison and Don Broussard had just arrived from Austin and Pete Strickland, Peter Sprouse, and many others had just come down from Tanchipa in the El Abra. Many others were there including Don Shofstall, Diana Emerson, and Peter Lord from England.

December 28, 1973

We drove into Valles to eat at the Condesa and met another group there from Austin. Amoung them were Logan McNatt, Bill Russell, Craig Bittinger, Barbara Vinson, Ivy Atherton, and Neal Morris. Ivy joined our group after finding out that her group were heading into the mountains for 6-8 days. After getting a coke at the square, our group headed for Ahuacatlan. We stopped at the Xilitla house and from there we headed to Jalpan and Ahuacatlan. At Ahuacatlan we found a new road being built towards El Sotano and we drove up the new road as far as we could. From where the road ended we hiked to the big dolina located next to Sotano del Macho Rey. Mike and I were the only ones to make it Arriving back at the van, we drove back down to Ahuacatlan where we camped.

December 29, 1973

After getting our gear together we drove back down the road and stopped at the overlook above Puente de Dios. We hiked down to the entrance with the river pouring in. After trying to determine a way to enter, we headed back to the trail and onward to Cueva del Rio Jalpan, which is the lower entrance to the system. We located quite a few small sinks along the trail and one entered went about 35 feet down and still dropping. Very interesting. After arriving at the lower entrance we entered the cold water and checked out a lead on the left wall. We went about 1000 feet down the passage and the water finally got to us. The temperature of the water at this point was 59. After taking several more pictures we headed back and made it back to the van shortly after dark.

December 30, 1973

From Ahuacatlan we headed west to Pinal de Amoles and San Juan Del Rio. After hanging around San Juan del Rio for awhile we drove south to Tula located in the state of Hidalgo.

December 31,1973

The day was spent at the ruins at Tula and Teotihuacan and then we headed into Mexico City. A good time was had until we found a lot of things were stolen out of the van. Keith decided to leave Mexico so we headed North and

stopped south of San Luis Potosi and slept.

January 1, 1974

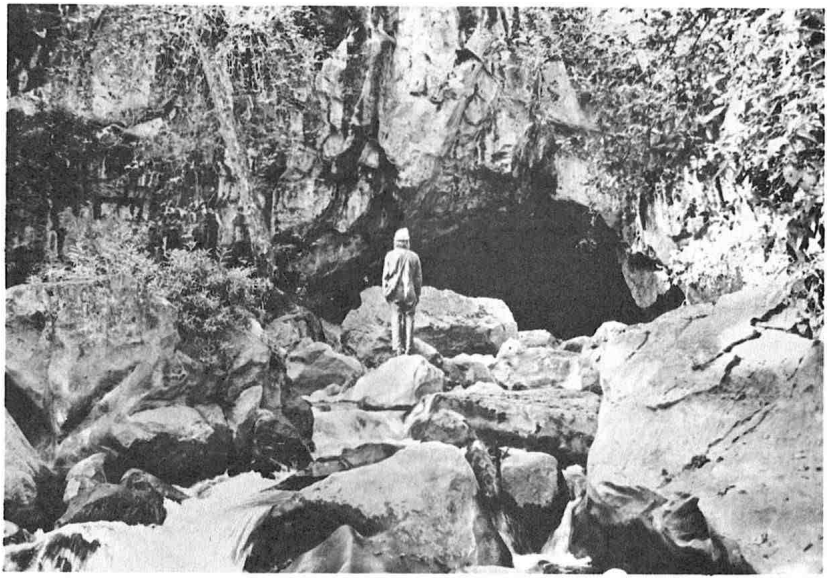
Ivy and I talked the group into driving us to Valles where we got out with Bob Lieberman and Mike VanNote at the Condesa. Keith, Hal, and Mike headed for the States from here.

January 2, 1974

The morning was spent doing nothing and in the early afternoon Don Shofstall and Diana Emerson along with Julie Rodamaker, Ivy, and myself headed for Cueva de Los Sabinos. We were in Don's vehicle and it took us about 30 minutes to get there. We stayed in the cave about 1 hour and found it to be very interesting.

January 3, 1974

Julie fixed a large pot of beans and several of us helped her eat them and Bob Addis and a friend drove in about this time. Later a very large group of cavers went into Valles and saw Kansas City Bombers. It was in English with Spanish sub-titles.



Lower entrance to Jalpan Keith Heuss

January 4, 1974

We caught a ride into Valles with Bob Addis where 10 or 15 cavers descended upon the Condesa for breakfast. After getting back, Jim, Julie, Don Coons, Alexia Cochran, Ivy and myself set off in Jim's truck to Cueva de Sacatalae and Sotano de Sacatalae. These were new caves just found. While Ivy, Julie, and Alexia went into the new pit, Jim, Don, Eli, and myself went and mapped Cueva de Sacatalae. It was a rather small cave on top of the El Abra ridge. The trail to the cave was exciting because of the Jaguar traps which were set in the trail every so often. The girls were supposed to map the pit but they had decided against it. Jim, Don, and I then entered and mapped it. We surveyed it to around 380' deep. We arrived back at Los Sabinos pretty late that night.

January 5, 1974

This was the day that Pete, Logan and their group was supposed to come out of the mountains, so we waited around camp all day. Pete's truck pulled in soon after dark and Ivy and I got a ride back to the States with them. There were people in camp from California, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York, and of course Texas.

January 6, 1974

After getting everything together, our group which consisted of nine, headed for Valles and a good meal. From there we headed home and crossed the border at Matamoros. Everyone crashed at my house in Petronila at 3:30 in the morning, but only after raiding the refrigerator.

Sotano de Coatituesday Steve Fleming

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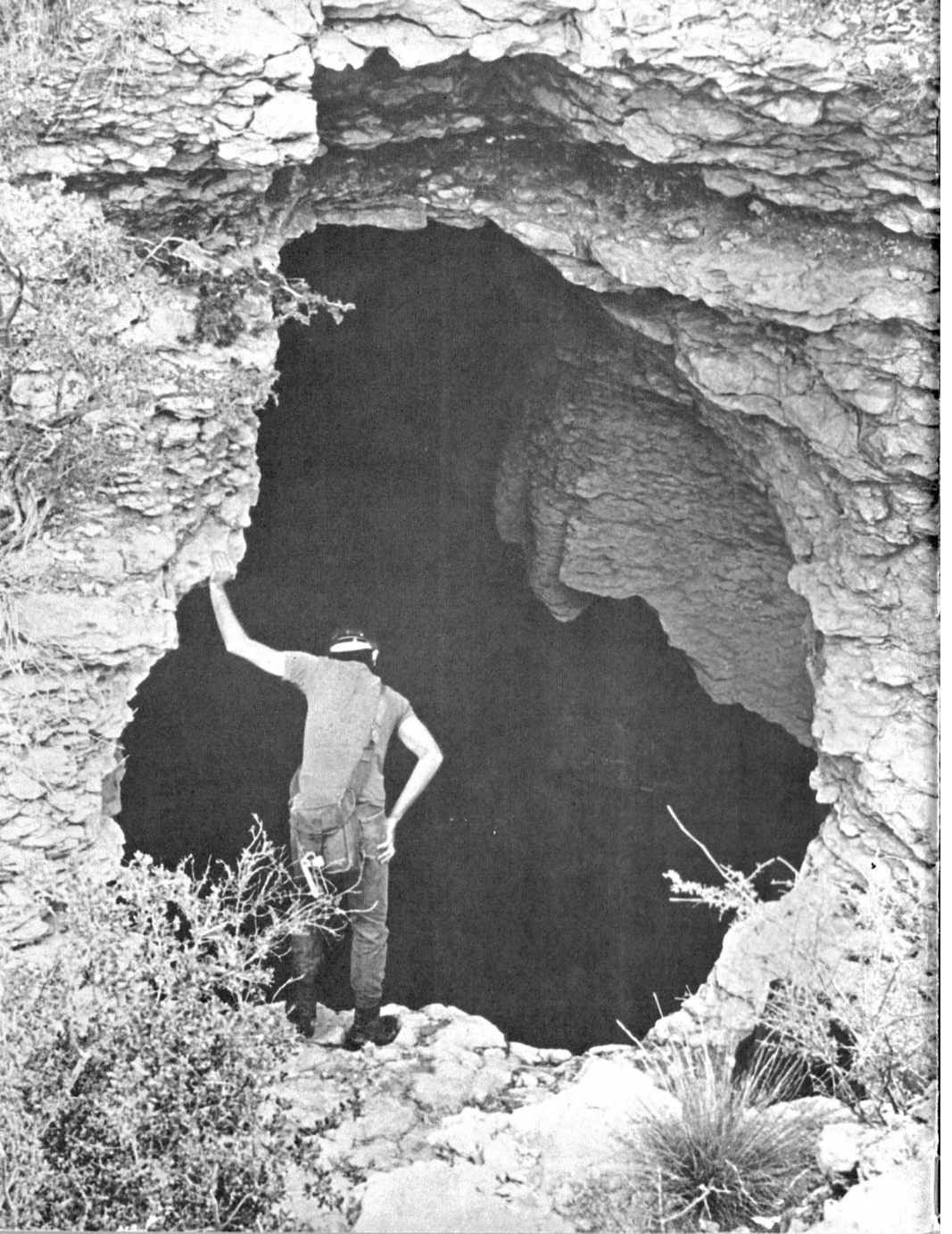
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